

SECTION 2: PURPOSE AND NEED

A preliminary *Purpose and Need Statement* for the US 31 Kokomo Corridor Project was presented for public and resource agency comment in June 2003. The findings were presented at a Public Meeting and an Interagency Review Meeting in July 2003. Based on comments received from the public and resource agencies, the *Purpose and Need Statement* was revised accordingly and is available on the project website, www.us31kokomo.com. The following is a summary of the purpose and need presented in the DEIS.

2.1 Project Need Statement

Transportation improvements to US 31 in the City of Kokomo and Howard County between SR 26 and the US 35 northern junctions are needed based on the following:

Safety

- The study corridor, as a whole, has a fatal crash rate more than twice the statewide average fatal crash rate. There was at least one fatal crash in the project area each year during a six year study period.

Travel Time and Traffic Congestion

- The average travel speed through the project area (30 mph) is approximately half the average travel speed in the adjacent north and south comparable segments (58 mph). Likewise, the average travel time through the corridor (18 minutes) is double the average travel time through adjacent segments of similar length. (9 minutes).
- In 2002, two intersections were operating at level of service (LOS) E or F during the PM peak hour, below the minimum acceptable levels of service.
- By 2030, seven intersections are projected to operate at LOS E or F during the PM peak hour, below the minimum acceptable levels of service.

Additional Considerations:

Consistency with Statewide and Regional Long Range Transportation Plans

- US 31 has been designated as a Statewide Mobility Corridor by the State of Indiana and represents the only continuous transportation link between Indianapolis and north-central Indiana and the City of South Bend.
- A study of a US 31 east bypass in Howard County is currently in INDOT's *Long Range Plan*.
- The Kokomo-Howard County Governmental Coordinating Council (KHCGCC), the

area's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), has endorsed, as part of its 2030 *Transportation Plan (adopted by resolution date February 3, 2006)*, an east bypass of the existing US 31, characterized as a multi-lane, divided, limited access facility.

2.2 Project Purpose Statement

Based on the identified transportation needs, the purpose of the US 31 Kokomo Corridor Project is to:

- Improve the level of safety for motorists traveling along the US 31 corridor.
- Reduce traffic congestion and travel time within the US 31 corridor for both local and through traffic.
- Provide for reliable and efficient movement of commerce and regional travel consistent with the criteria in INDOT's *Long Range Plan* for Statewide Mobility Corridors and regional long range transportation plans.

2.3 Evaluation Criteria for Satisfying Purpose and Need

Project alternatives were developed and evaluated for their ability to satisfy the project's Purpose and Need using the following criteria:

- Reduction in crash rates to a level comparable to statewide averages resulting from reductions in traffic congestion due to modifications to the characteristics of the US 31 transportation facility (e.g., facility type or vehicle distribution).
- Reduction in travel time (decrease in delay) through the project corridor consistent with adjacent US 31 segments, and achieving minimally acceptable LOS D (LOS C for off-alignment freeway segments) or better.

The following criterion was identified as an additional consideration in the evaluation of preliminary alternatives:

- Consistency with the criteria in INDOT's *Long Range Plan* for Statewide Mobility Corridors and consistency with regional long range transportation plans. (Note: Project alternatives were not required to meet this criterion in order to satisfy the project's Purpose and Need.)

2.4 Summary

Improvements to safety, travel time and traffic congestion, and consistency with statewide and regional long range transportation plans remain the main considerations for the US-31 Kokomo Corridor Project. There have been no changes made to the project's Purpose and Need since the publication of the DEIS.

